



# Physical Activity Guidelines for School-Aged Children

## Did You Know?

In addition to the numerous health benefits, children who are physically active tend to do better in school!



School-aged children and adolescents should get at total of 1 hour or more of physical activity daily. This 1 hour should include moderate- and vigorous- intensity *aerobic activity*, as well as *muscle strengthening* and *bone strengthening* activities. You may notice some overlapping of activities in the three categories. That just means that one activity, such as running, has many benefits.

- **Aerobic-** Aerobic activities involve large muscle groups and can be classified as moderate or vigorous in terms of intensity. Make sure your child participates in vigorous activity at least 3 days per week. Vigorous activities increase the heart rate and rate of breathing, so that your child cannot carry on a conversation while doing the activity. This is referred to as the “talk test” and is a good gauge to determine intensity.
  - A few examples of aerobic activities are walking, running, swimming, dancing, jumping rope, and bicycling.
- **Muscle Strengthening-** These activities strengthen muscles by using them in ways that are not a part of daily life and should be done 2-3 days each week.
  - Examples of muscle strengthening activities include push-ups, sit-ups, using playground equipment, and performing exercises with resistance bands.
- **Bone Strengthening-** These activities stimulate healthy bone growth and also bone strength through impact, and should typically be performed 3 days per week. These activities apply some force to the bones, which helps to strengthen them.
  - Examples of bone strengthening activities are jumping rope, running, playing tennis, and playing hopscotch.

**Aim for 1 hour or more each day!** There are additional health benefits when children and adolescents are active for more than 1 hour per day. If your child or adolescent is currently not active, start with quick and do-able physical activities, such as a short 15 minute walk, and then gradually increase both the amount of time and the intensity. If your child or adolescent already is active for 1 hour each day, gradually increase that amount of time, as well.